main reasons for the fall in production are unfavourable monsoon conditions and diversification of sugarcane for fodder purposes.

(e) It may be mentioned that the conventional sugar cycle of two years of high production followed by two years of low production has already been broken. Sugar production during the last three seasons as also during the current season has been relatively high. This has resulted in high carry forward stocks with the sugar factories. Sugar output in 2002-03 sugar season will depend, *inter alia*, on weather conditions, plantation of sugarcane, etc.

MoU with HCL Infosys

†*173. SHRI C. P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Posts has signed a MoU with HCL Infosys to provide them the network of post offices across the country to market its entire range of computer products;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the financial benefits to be generated by the Department of Posts from this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) The Department of Posts and HCL Infosystems have signed MoU with the intention of development and introduction of the following services for mutual benefit:

(i) Usage of Speed Post by HCL at the all India level.

(ii) Booking of orders for HCL products through Post Office network.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(c) Detailed operational agreement based on the MoU is yet to be finalized on the precise nature of service, accounting and pricing matters.

Connecting Villages with Optical Fibre Cables

†*174. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to connect the villages under Rohuru Telephone Exchange in district Shimla with optical fibre cables, so that all weather facility of telephones is made available to the villages; and

(b) whether Government propose to issue instructions to the Assistant Engineer (Telecom) Rohuru to pay a visit every week for inspection of the telephone exchange, Rohuru and other exchanges connected with it to ensure satisfactory working of the exchange?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) At present, Rohuru Exchange is connected to Shimla through radio system. Work for providing Optical Firbe Cable connectivity to Rohuru Exchange is also in progress and is likely to be completed by 31st March, 2002.

Currently, Rohuru and its associated 26 exchanges are being looked after by SDO, Jubbal in the same SDCA(Short Distance Charging Area). Instructions have been issued to him on 11.2.2002 to visit all exchanges and he has already visited 11 exchanges during the one month period since the orders were issued. He has been further instructed to monitor the Rohuru Exchange and its associated exchanges on a weekly basis and complete inspections of remaining exchanges.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.